

THE SKYRMES OF PEMBROKESHIRE

1. Manorbier & Penally



CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE
COPÍ DILYS O GOFNOD PRIDODAS

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE
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Application Number
M1914-2 2955350-2

1839. Marriage solemnised at the Parish Church in the Parish of St Mary's in the County of Pembroke.

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
70	13th October 1839	George Skyrme	24	Single	Bookbinder	St Mary's Church	Charles Skyrme	Bookbinder
	13th October 1839	Eliza Thomas	24	Single	Spinster	St Mary's Church	David Thomas	Spinster

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by licence, by me, J. Walter Lewis

This Marriage was solemnised between us, George Skyrme and Eliza Thomas in the presence of, The mark of David Thomas George Thomas

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Marriages in the Registration District of Pembroke

GIVEN at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office this 29th day of January 2011

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WMXZ 269164



David J Skyrme

2nd Edition (Partial Draft 1)

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Cover photos:

Left column top to bottom:

- Manorbier Reading Room (see page xxx)
- Albion Square and School, Pembroke Dock
- Marriage Certificate – George Skyrme & Eliza Thomas (1939)

Right column: top to bottom

- James Skyrme & Ellen Harrison, Pembroke circa 1908
- Penally

PREFACE

The first edition of *The Skyrmes of Pembrokeshire: (1) Manorbier & Penally* was published in November 2011. It was prompted by researching my own ancestors who came from this area of South Wales.

Since then I have widened my genealogical research to study Skyrmes in general. This is what is called a One-Name Study (ONS): "a project researching all occurrences of a surname, as opposed to a particular pedigree".¹



This is an ongoing long-term project which has resulted in two other 'first edition' publications on the skyrme.info website:

- *The Skyrmes of Pembrokeshire: (2) Llangwm and The Cleddau* (May 2015)
- *The Skyrmes of Herefordshire* (Sept 2015)

Since 2011 I have received corrections and inputs from correspondents. In addition, many more sources have come online, and I have been able to do more in-depth research at Pembrokeshire Archives in Haverfordwest. I have also visited and photographed the locations where Skyrme families lived. As a result an update is long overdue.

Compared to the first edition, I have reduced the coverage of my own ancestors and taken a more holistic approach of looking at families in their geographic and historic context. Thus I have minimised giving blow by blow details of all family members. Those who wish to have such detail can always request from me narrative reports (ancestors / descendants of a given individual) from my master database. I have also used a different style and formatting, which I hope improves readability.



Another change is that I am publishing this edition in instalments. If I waited until all my research was reasonably complete it would be months, even a year or more, before a complete edition was published. So expect new chapters and refinements to existing chapters to appear periodically.

Researching the Skyrmes has been both frustrating and fascinating. You would think that with such an unusual name it would be easy to find relevant records. However, being an unfamiliar surname it is frequently mis-read by transcribers, meaning that you struggle to find a record that you are sure should be there. On the other hand when you go through the great variety of records that exist, you can piece together some interesting personal profiles and stories.

The story of the Skyrmes is not something that I could accomplish alone. I would like to acknowledge the work done by others who have also researched the Skyrmes of Pembrokeshire, usually as part of their own family trees, and who have freely shared their findings on various genealogy websites and forums. In particular I would like to thank those who have contacted me directly and provided photographs and other material and who have responded willingly to my enquiries.

As always, I welcome corrections and feedback so that the study can become as useful as possible to those interested in the Skyrmes.

David J Skyrme
Highclere, England
October 2017

(Registered with the Guild of One-Name Studies, member 6232)

¹ This definition and a further explanation can be found on the website of The Guild of One-Name Studies (www.one-name.org)

1 WHERE'S THAT NAME FROM?

Skyrme is a relatively rare name. There are only 954 instances in an analysis of surnames in a 2002 database, ranking it 6,881 in terms of popularity.²

Over the last few centuries it has had various spellings before becoming standardised today mostly as Skyrme, or less frequently as Skyrm. It's pronunciation is skə: m (rhymes with term, firm) so common earlier spellings that sound the same are Skirme, Skirm, Skerm and Skerme.

Origins

Because of its relative rarity the name Skyrme does not feature in most books of surnames. One online source lists the name Skirme as being derived from the medieval French *eskirmer*, a fencing master. Skrimshire, Skermer, Skirmer are given as alternative spellings. While the link to a "fencing master" seems a bit far-fetched, it is not too far removed from what seems a more credible source, the Internet Surname Database, compiled by Michael Brook. Here it states that it derives from the Middle English "skirme(n)" meaning "to fight," "to defend." He cites instances of Skurmere, Skirmer, Skerme from the late 13th century in Oxfordshire, Lancashire and Sussex. Searches of early parish records (16th and 17th centuries) in these counties show only a single isolated baptism reference to a John Skyrme born in Chichester, Sussex in 1597.

Early Locations

It is in Herefordshire where there are that shows the largest number of early references to Skyrme. The main early clusters in England are as follows:

- **Lugwardine, Herefordshire** - Over 130 parish records from 1540 to 1766. In the early days the spelling was exclusively Skirme, with Skyrme appearing periodically in the mid-1600s, and becoming the standard after 1700. Skyrmes appeared in Brockhampton from the mid 1600s while in the 18th century Skyrmes are found in several Herefordshire locations.
- **Ludlow, Shropshire** - Scores of references to Skirme in this town just over the Herefordshire

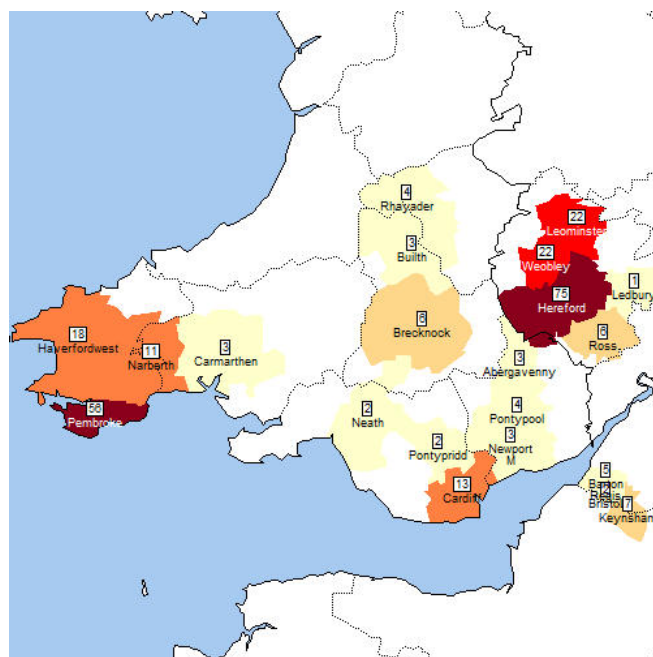
border. In the 1640s, one Thomas Skirme, an attorney, moved to Llawhaden, Pembrokeshire. This was the start of the spread of the family into Pembrokeshire.

- **Spalding, Lincolnshire** - scores of references to Skirme (occasionally Skirm) from 1587-1770 in the Spalding area; also several references to Skerme in the same area.
- **Meopham, Kent** - a few references to Skirme in the early 1600s. There is also a larger cluster of Skormes in Gillingham.
- **London** - there are several records to Skyrme in the early to mid-17th century.

There were also two early clusters of Skyrmes in the United States:

- **Henrico County, Virginia** - Skerme from 1655
- **Trenton, New Jersey** - Skirm from 1714.

Coming more up to date, the map below (generated by *Surname Atlas*) shows the main distribution of Skyrme (and its variants) in 1881. Within Pembrokeshire, the main focus is around the towns of Pembroke and Pembroke Dock.



Over time the early spellings of Skirm(e) and Skerm(e) have virtually disappeared, except for Skirm in the USA. The relative frequency of different variants through the 19th and early 20th century in both the UK and the USA is covered more fully in another article.³

² *Surnames of England & Wales, The Office of National Statistics database*. Accessible at www.taliesin-arleyn.net/names/

³ *Skyrme: from a Family History to a One Name Study*, Journal of the One-Name Society (July-Sept 2015).

2 EARLY PEMBROKESHIRE SKYRMES

There were three early clusters of Skyrmes in Pembrokeshire. These are:

1. Skirmes (later Skyrmes) of Llawhaden. This was the most famous family, descendants of Thomas Skirme, the attorney who moved from Ludlow in the mid 1600s. There are many records (wills, leases etc.) of this family in various archives. They were landed gentry and are featured in *The Llawhaden Book*.⁴ However, their line seems to have died out in Llawhaden by the early 1800s, though it seems some descendents moved to Laugharne about then.
2. Skyrms of Llangwm. Mostly fishermen and ferrymen, who stayed in the local area throughout the 19th century. This branch of the Skyrmes of Pembrokeshire is covered in *The Skyrmes of Pembrokeshire (2) – Llangwm and The Cleddau*, available at www.skyrmeinfo.
3. Skyrmes of Manorbier / Penally. This is my branch of the family, whose earliest known appearance in Pembrokeshire records was the marriage of John Skyrme to Elizabeth Maurice at Ludchurch in October 1774. This branch is the subject of this document.

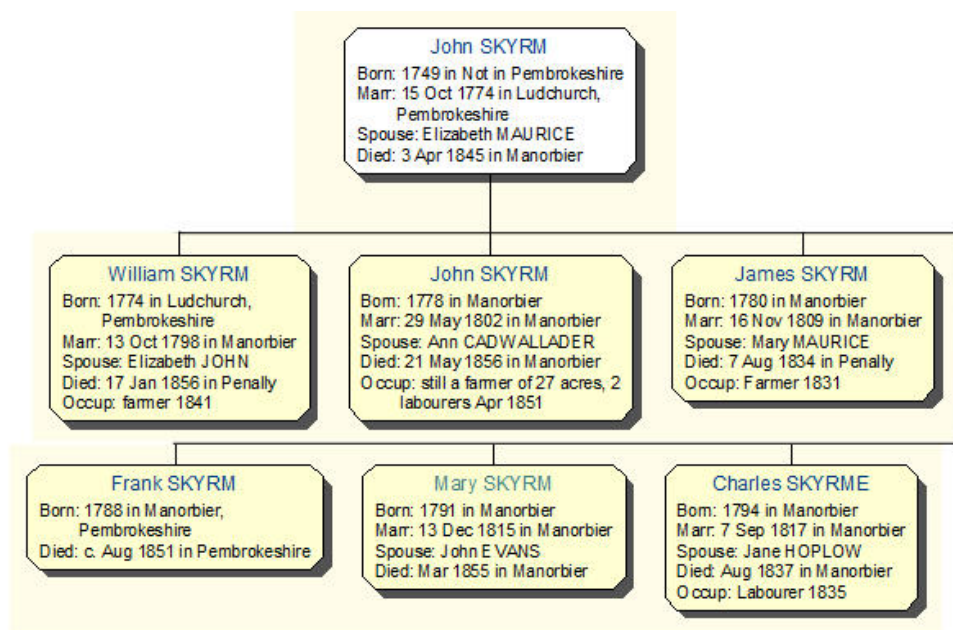
So far, it has not been possible to provide links between these clusters, nor show the connections between clusters 2 and 3 to Herefordshire. To complicate matters there was also a family of Skyrmes in Haverfordwest, but it is likely that they descended from the Llawhaden Skyrmes.

As far as our cluster is concerned, the 1841 census for Manorbier records John as being born "not in Pembrokeshire". It is highly likely that the "not in Pembrokeshire" is actually Herefordshire. A booklet

on the History of Ludchurch identifies a Thomas Skyrme as a landowner in Ludchurch in 1786.⁵ It notes:

"A holding known as Mountain was owned by John Martin, Thomas Skyrme and Picton Estate in succession, which may have been part of Farthing's End"

Not only was Thomas a common name among the Herefordshire Skyrmes at the time, the Skyrmes of Llawhaden had close relationships with the Phillips of Picton. The Vaynor Estate was in the possession of a Thomas Skyrme from the Llawhaden branch until it was sold by order of Chancery to pay off debts in 1787. So it is highly likely that the Thomas Skyrme landowner at Ludchurch was the Thomas Skyrme of Vaynor. So did he encourage a distant relative from Herefordshire to come to Ludchurch? A search for possible baptisms of John Skyrmes in Herefordshire is inconclusive.



The chart above shows the children of John and Elizabeth. By 1778 they had moved from Ludchurch to Manorbier where five of their six children were born. At the time of the 1841 census, their descendents were found at Penally (5 families and 19 individuals), and Manorbier (3 families and 10 individuals), including my own great great grandparents, George and Eliza Skyrme.

⁴ *The Llawhaden Book*, Mary Houseman Llan Aidan Press (2004)

⁵ *Our Village: A History of Ludchurch*, A Eric Evans (1994)

Descendants of John and Elizabeth

John married Elizabeth Maurice (which would be spelt Morris today) in Ludchurch, about 11 miles north east of Manorbier. After they had their first child William there in 1774, they had their other five children in Manorbier from 1778, of which my ancestor Charles was the youngest.

It seems that James moved to Penally about 1813 followed 2-3 years later by his eldest brother William. Both Johns (father and son) and Charles remained in Manorbier. The eldest three sons had 20 children between them while we think that Charles was father to just one, George (b 12 Dec 1819).⁶

Eldest son William (1774-1856) was born in Ludchurch the same year that his parent married. He moved with his parents to Manorbier around 1776. There on 13th October 1798 he married Elizabeth John. There were more marriages between Skyrmes and Johns a couple of generations later (John Skyrme grandson of William's brother John married first Phebe John and later her sister Barbra John).

William and Elizabeth had four daughters and three sons. The first six were born in Manorbier, and their youngest Martha was born in Penally after they moved there around 1817.

Number of Skyrme Decendants by Generation of John Skyrme and Elizabeth Maurice

2 nd Gen	3 rd Gen	4 th Gen	5 th Gen	6 th Gen	7 th Gen	8 th Gen	Total
William	7	6	22	Work in progress			36
John	5	17	43				66
James	8	24	16				49
Charles	2	11	15				29
Total families	8	19	39				70
Total individuals	22	58	96				180

Note: Totals in the right hand column include the four brothers and their families

Of the five boys, four are responsible for all of the descendants of John and Elizabeth. Frank (listed as Francis on his death record) is believed to have been single. He has not been found on either the 1841 or 1851 census records. The table above shows the number of Skyrme children in each generation. It also shows the number of Skyrme families, i.e. where a male Skyrme has married, including those families who are childless. Work is continuing on 'drilling down' the different family branches, so this table will be updated in future editions of this document.

The three eldest sons of John and Elizabeth were farmers in their own right while Charles (my ancestor) was merely a farm labourer. Their farms in 1841 were in Manorbier (Green Grove), Penally and Llangan. The farming Skyrmes and their farms are covered more fully in Chapter 3.

All three sons were named John. Each John was named after an earlier son who had died (the eldest born 1799 reached the age of 11). The youngest John was born on 15th May 1814 and it is his line that propagates the name Skyrme. William, initially a farm labourer was a farmer by 1841. At the 1851 census their daughter Martha was living with them along with her husband Benjamin Harris and their three children. William was described as a labourer on parish relief. He was then aged 77. He died in 1856 aged 86, whilst Elizabeth survived him a further nine years, reaching the age of 90.

John (1778-1856), William's younger brother was the first of John Skyrme's five children to be born in Manorbier in an 18 year period starting in 1778. He married Ann Cadwallader. The Cadwalladers were of ancient lineage, some say descendants of King Cadwaladr of Gwynedd who reigned c. 655 – 682. Anne's lineage has been traced back by other Ancestry.co.uk researchers four generations to Thomas Cadwallader (born 1687) and a further two generations back from his wife Hannah Merchant to

⁶ Clive Pinch's research suggested that Charles was also father to a James Skyrme (b 1823 Manorbier), and this error has been propagated in several family trees on Ancestry.co.uk. However, examination of the certificate of his marriage shows that he was the son of John (b 1778).

Lewis Bishop (born 1639).⁷ A Cadwallader relation also features in this branch of the family. John's eldest son Joseph married Ann's niece, his cousin, Ann Beddow (also spelt Beddoe).

John and Ann farmed 27 acres at Green Grove, Jameston, a village in Manorbier parish see map at the start of the next chapter. They were there from before 1841 until John's death in 1856. They had five children between 1803 and 1823, all christened at Manorbier church, though they were possibly born at the farm in Jameston.



Green Grove, Jameston, Manorbier, c2010. From the website of Grove Grove Bed and breakfast (Ray and Chris Hughes) - www.greengrovebedandbreakfast.co.uk. Photo credit: Gareth Davies, Tenby

James (1780-1834), the third of the sons of John and Elizabeth (nee Maurice) married Mary Maurice, probably a cousin, in Manorbier in November 1809. Like elder brother John, James and Elizabeth also moved from Manorbier to Penally. Based on the birthplaces of their various children, they preceded John and Elizabeth's move by about five years (1812 rather than 1817).

James and Mary had eight children born between 1811 and 1831. Four of them were boys. All married and had children giving James and Mary 24 grandchildren in total. While eldest son lived and died in Penally, the others moved away. James became a tool gate keeper in Abergvanney, William was the

closet, He moved to Tenby, first as a baker, and later as a licenced victualler, publican of the Victoria Public House in Marsh Road. Youngest son Thomas became a shipwright at Pembroke Dock.

We now turn to Charles (1794-1837), the fourth of the sons of John and Elizabeth who carried on the Skyrme line. We know little about Charles as he died at the relatively young age of 41. His wife, Jane, however, survived him by 20 years. Also his father John lived to the ripe old age of 96 as a lodger of John Evans (another farm labourer) and his family of four just a few houses along. In the 1841 census Jane is shown as living with her son George, his wife Eliza and their 9 month old son Charles, next to the Beerhouse. She was no doubt a great help around the household, since George and Eliza had seven children all living at home when she died in 1857.

While his uncles and brothers were farmers, George was the first in the family to become a shipwright, while living at Jameston near Manorbier. He wanted all his sons to learn a skilled trade, and as we shall see, the shipwright and carpentry tradition was strong in this branch of the family from that time. It should also be noted, that quite a few Skyrmes in other branches of the family were also shipwrights (see Occupations).

This chapter has given an overview of the four children of John Skyrme and Elizabeth Maurice. As noted in the Preface, I do not intend to give a

detailed account, family by family, of the different branches. You will find more information on some of them in the different thematic chapters of this document. If you are interested in more detailed information about your ancestors, please contact me for a narrative of the relevant portion of my master database. Such information will also be made available in future on the trees section of the skyrme.info website,

John Skyrme was over 95 when he died in 1845. When he was born the average life expectancy of a man was just over 40.

This chapter concludes with a timeline of key events up to 1871 for the four families on the next page.

⁷ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cadwallader> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cadwaladr>. One more recent member of this family was John Cadwalader of Philadelphia, a descendant of a 1697 US immigrant. He was a general during the revolutionary war.

Timeline

Date	William (1774-1856)	John (1778-1856)	James (1780-1834)	Charles (1794-1837)
pre-1800	1798 marries Labourer Manorbier First child (John) born			
1801	Another 6 children Son John dies 1810 c1816 Moves to Penally A farmer by 1819	1802 - marries 4 children (1803-1818) Living in Manorbier	1809 - marries c1813 - moves to Penally 5 children (1811-1818) Labourer	1817 - marries Labourer - all his life 2 children (1817, 1819) Living in Manorbier
1815	Napoleonic War: distress in the country over high food prices			
1821	1835 Son John marries	1823 - another son 1840 - Son Joseph marries	3 more children (1821-1831) Now a farmer 1834 - dies Penally before any of his children marries 1835 - Son John marries	1837 - dies, Manorbier 1839 - Son George, a shipwright, marries
1839	Rebecca riots in Pembrokeshire to protest at high cost of tolls to transport farm goods			
1841	Famer in Penally Children also in Penally	Farmer of 27 acres at Green Grove, Manorbier 1844 - son James marries	Widow Mary has 4 children at home (Park House, Penally) 1842 - Son William marries in Tenby 1843 - Son James marries and become tollgate keeper in Abergavenny 1848 - Son Thomas is shipwright at Hakin and marries	Widow Jane lives with son George and family at Bear, next to Beerhouse, Manorbier She has one grandchild
1842	Royal Commission on Education finds that majority of Pembrokeshire children can speak only Welsh			
1845	Irish potato famine - most migrants to South Wales settle in Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Merthyr			
1850	Rhondda becomes very industrialised - now a "vision of hell" vs. a rural "happy valley" in 1847			
1851	On parish relief >11 grandchildren (most in Penally/Tenby) 1856 - dies Penally Son John's first wife Phebe John dies 1855. He remarries (Mary Lewis) in 1859	Still at Green Grove 4 children in Manorbier but son James and family is at Llandewy Velfry near Whitland. He now has 14 grandchildren 1856 - dies Manorbier 1859 - Wife Ann dies	Widow Mary now at Wheelhouse, Penally. Moves to Newton, Manorbier by 1861. Has >22 grandchildren	Jane is still with George's family, now at Monkton and with five grandchildren 1857 - Jane dies at Monkton
1854	South Wales Railway from Cardiff reaches Whitland			
1861	Widow Elizabeth now lives with her daughter Martha and her husband Benjamin 1864 - Elizabeth dies in Penally.	Eldest son Joseph now farms Green Grove, helped by bachelor borthor John. Son James, a farmer, has moved to Pontefinon, Llangan, Carmarthenshire.	Son John has returned from Monmouthshire to Penally and is now a bootmaker. Shipwright son Thomas has moved to Gillingham, Kent.	Son George still at Monkton, now with 8 living children. His three eldest sons are shipwright apprentices
1863	Tenby to Pembroke Railway (via Penally) opens			
1868	Railway link between Tenby and Whitland opens			
1871	Son John is now a quarryman. Grandson John has joined the army and has served in Singapore, China and South Africa.	Joseph and John still at Green Grove. James is now near St Clears. One grandson is training to be a congregational minister in Bradford, Yorkshire.	Widow Mary still living with daughter Mary, who is now married to Thomas Davies, a farmer of 38 acres in Manorbier. 1871 - Mary dies	Six of George's living sons are now shipwrights. The seventh (Francis) is a tailor's apprentice. 1876 - George dies.

3 MANORBIER & ENVIRONS



The most striking thing about Manorbier is its castle which overlooks the beach, which is downhill from the village. Dating from the 12th century, it belonged to the de Barri family, whose ancestor the Norman knight Odo de Barri was given the lands of Manorbier, Begelly and Penally for his help in conquering Pembrokeshire after 1093.



Across the valley, opposite the castle and outside the main village is the parish church of St James, which saw the baptisms, weddings and funerals of the Skyrmes who lived there.

Ordinary people, however, would have lived up in the village and in the various small villages and hamlets within the parish, including Jameston, Manorbier Newton and Lydstep. The parish covers a total area of 5.67 square miles (3,757 acres) and abuts Penally to its east.

Lewis in *A Topographical Dictionary of South Wales* (1833) describes it thus:

“within two miles to the south of the turnpike road leading from Tenby to Pembroke: it contains a moderate portion of good arable and pasture land in good cultivation, and a small tract of hilly and barren waste; and, with the exception of such as are employed in the limestone quarries, which are worked only to a small extent, the population is wholly engaged in agriculture.”

John and Elizabeth Skyrme arrived in Manorbier around 1776. In 1841 There were Skyrmes in five households in Manrbier and five in Penally. It was not until later that the descendants of John and Elizabeth moved further afield.

The map shows locations that feature in various censuses. These will be elaborate upon in the next update of this document,



St James church Manorbier – viewed from castle

4 FARMING FAMILIES

This chapter is under development.

The three eldest sons of John Skyrme and Elizabeth Maurice were farmers, as were many of their descendants. In this chapter we start by looking at their holdings in Manorbier and Penally and then the movement of their descendants further afield.

Tithe Apportionments in 1843

Listed on this tithe assessment are 20 parcels of land occupied by Skyrmes in Manorbier, 7 in Penally and one at Lydstep. Many of the Manorbier ones are occupied by a John Skyrme. This name appears four times with three different owners – Ann Dunn, Arthur Williams eq. And Ann Williams. One is Green Grove at Jameston, which the 1841 and 1851 censuses link to John the son of John and Elizabeth. Other locations include East Moor, Kiln Park and Sugarland. Since there are over 100 acres and the censuses give Greengrove as 27 acres, some of these locations may be occupied by other John Skyrmes, such as a cousin or nephew..

At Penally William and his wife Elizabeth own just 4 acres between them, including Tongue meadow. William is described as a farmer in the 1841 census but by 1851, when he was 76, he was living with his daughter Martha and family and Described as "parish relief labourer". Of their children, only one – John Skyrme (1814-1886) was a farmer, but after 1841 then he became a quarryman and then an agricultural labourer.

Coming Soon

Some of the stories that will be covered when this chapter is further developed include:

- The move to St Clears and area near the border with Carmarthenshire.
- The tragic accident that befell Thomas Skyrme on the Corston estate, just outside Pembroke. He was pinned down by an overturned threshing machine in 1910 and died in agony 7 hours later.
- A legal dispute in 1910 between tenant farmer Edwin Skyrme of Lamphey Farm and his landlord Charles Mathias Esquire over non-payment of rent.

5 DRIFT TO THE DOCKYARDS

This chapter is under development.

Many descendants of John and Elizabeth's youngest son Charles (1794-1837) became shipwrights. Some descendants of the farming brothers also became dockyard workers. Unsurprisingly some of the daughters married into shipwright families.

Several Skyrme shipwright families moved from Royal Dockyard to Royal Dockyard including Barrow, Sheerness and Portsmouth. Other dockyards like Chatham, Haulbowline (Cork, Ireland) and Bermuda will also feature in this chapter.

6 MINING MIGRANTS

This chapter is under development.

With the development of the South Wales coalfields in the late 18th century, it was inevitable that it would draw in people from other parts of South Wales. Thus at the turn of the century you find quite a few Skyrme families in places like Abergavenny and Blaenavon, in both coal mines and ironworks. In these towns and also Cardiff, Skyrmes from both Herefordshire and Pembrokeshire rubbed shoulders.

The skills that the menfolk developed were also in demand in the coal mines and iron works of Pittsburgh and other parts of Pennsylvania, where Skyrme families still live today.

Another chapter will cover the onward migration to other parts of the United States and into other trades and professions.

7 TRAINS, BOATS & PLANES

Great Western Connections



The railway in South Wales was created by the need to ship coal from the South Wales Valleys to London. In addition, Brunel had a vision of linking London with New York. A prospectus for the

South Wales Railway was published in 1844. It would link with the Great Western in Gloucestershire and end at Fishguard where it would connect with ships to Ireland and New York. The first section between Chepstow and Swansea was completed in 1850. But due to financial problems and the lack of connecting railways at Waterford in Ireland, the western terminus of the line was changed from Fishguard to New Milford (now known as Neyland).

The map below shows the lines in Pembrokeshire in the mid-19th century. As noted on the map the various companies that started these lines eventually all became part of the Great Western Railway (GWR).

In its heyday at the turn of the century GWR employed over 100,000 people so it was inevitable that it would touch the lives of some Skyrmes. It did so in three main ways. Skyrmes were employed on the railways, others served on GWR ships, and a few wealthier Skyrmes were shareholders.



Composite map of Pembrokeshire Railways 19th century

The first railway to reach Pembrokeshire was the extension of the line beyond Swansea that started in 1847. Originally intended to go to Fishguard for the Irish traffic, the plans were changed and it veered south from Clarbeston Road to reach Haverfordwest in 1853 and then extended into New Milford (now Neyland) by 1856 and a branch to 'old' Milford (Milford Haven) by 1863.

The Pembroke and Tenby railway started tentatively in 1853 and opened in 1863.

What started as a private project to serve the Rosebush slate quarry was extended beyond Maenclochog to Fishguard by 1895. In 1906 the Waterford and Cork ferries Welsh port was moved from Neyland to Fishguard, which by 1909 also started seeing transatlantic traffic, such as the liner *Mauretania*.

Although these lines started as separate ventures, they all ultimately came under the ownership of GWR - South Wales Railway in 1863, Pembroke & Tenby 1896 and Fishguard 1898.

Acknowledgement: Combining two maps contributed to Wikipedia by Afterbrunel CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=49902627>

The Pembroke and Tenby Railway 1868

Railway Employees

Much of the following uses information from GWR staff records that are now online at Ancestry. Newspaper reports also add interesting context.

Alfred Skyrms (1862-1945) was one of six sons of William Skyrme and Margaret Griffiths, who had moved from Manorbier to Castlemartin the year before Alfred was born. His great grandfather was William Skyrme of Ludchurch (b 1774) - see chart on page 5. The first record showing his involvement with the railways is his marriage certificate of 1886. He was then living in Blaenllechau, Glamorgan, and was a railway fireman. His local station would have been Ferndale on the Rhondda branch of the Taff Vale Railway. Other than census data we know little of his railway employment. But it was his move that probably prompted his younger brother Evan to follow in his footsteps. Of Evan's railway employment we know much more.⁸

Evan Skyrms (1864-1928). The first we learn of Evan's employment on the railways is from his GWR staff record. He was appointed a foreman porter at Ferndale on 17th June 1889. Previously, like some of his other brothers he had been a farm worker. The 1881 census records him as living at the 184 acre Lambeath Farm at Pwllcrochan, just outside Pembroke. There are eight further appointments listed in the GWR staff register 1910. It shows him as a porter at Penrath and Maerdy. In October 1902 he became a brakesman (guard) on passenger trains, first at Cardiff, then Merthyr Tydfil and then back at Maerdy. His wages started at 3/6 (3s 6d) a week and peaked at 87/6 a week in October 1920. The last entry shows he earned 65/- a week in July 1922.

Of particular interest are the entries in the 'Cautions and Fines' column of the staff register. Five incidents are listed, all when he was a brakesman:

- June 1902 - admonished for being careless; a 3rd class coach was derailed at Pontypridd.
- December 1903 - "cautioned for neglecting to give a signal to the driver"; damage to the brakesvan.
- April 1904- "suspended 5 days for refusing to go to Police Court to give evidence."
- November 1904 - cautioned for failing to give a proper signal while manoeuvring carriages in the carriage shed; a broken buffer shell.

- September 1915 - cautioned for releasing automatic brake and not applying sufficient force manually; two vans derailed.



A GWR Brake passenger van of the sort that Evan might have worked in. This one is preserved at Didcot Railway Centre. (Image source: http://www.wow.com/wiki/Coaches_of_the_Great_Western_Railway; Creative Commons Licence)

There are several references to Evan in South Wales newspapers. From *The South Wales Star* of 22nd January 1902:

"A man named Thomas Morgan, residing at Ferndale, was brought up charged with travelling without a ticket and insulting passengers in the train on Saturday last. Ticket-collector Evan Skyrms said that on the arrival of the 6.16 p.m. train on Saturday he saw the defendant descend from the train, but he refused to give up his ticket. He also gave a false name, and on being remonstrated with took off his coat and attempted to strike witness."

In another case reported in *The Cardiff Times* 12th December 1903, a commercial traveller was accused of defrauding the Taff Vale Railway by not having a ticker for the section of line he was travelling on. Part of the report reads:

"Evan Skyrms, brakesman on the train, stated that he saw the defendant in a compartment at Merthyr a quarter of an hour before it started. When he was asked for excess from Merthyr at Llandaff the defendant produced a pass and then a third-class ticket, which was out of date."

But it was during Evan's first job (at Ferndale) that he really hit the headlines. The headline of *The Western Mail* of 18th May 1894 reads: "Attempted Murder at Ferndale":

"John Bufton, a Railway Porter, was in custody before Cymmer magistrates charged with attempting to murder another Porter Evan Skyrme at Ferndale railway station."

⁸ After moving to Cardiff Alfred emigrated to Homestead, Pennsylvania in 1895, after which he was a labourer at a machine company.

The *Evening Express* gives more details:

"The evidence showed that the two men were on duty on the day in question, and Bufton came up to the complainant and threatened to push him under the train. After a struggle he got free, and reported the incident to the station-master, who cautioned the defendant. The next day, however, Bufton rushed upon Skyrme with an open knife, with which he tried to stab him, saying, "I will murder you, and then throw myself under the train." With difficulty Skyrme got away from the would-be murderer, and lodged a complaint with the police, who forthwith arrested him. Bufton said he had thought of killing Skyrme on the previous night. but he saw Skyrme's wife and child, and abandoned the idea for the time. W. Davies, a telegraph clerk, having corroborated, Bufton was ordered to find two sureties for £50 each to keep the peace for six months, or, failing that, to be imprisoned for three months with hard labour."

Henry Ward Skyrme (1877-1945) was a cousin of Evan. Born near St Clears, his name appears on several leases related to land owned by the John family (his mother was Barbara née John). These are being transcribed and will be described in a future edition of this document. By 1901 Ward (as he mostly called himself) had moved to the outskirts of Cardiff where he was a horse carter on a farm. By 1911 he was a platelayer on the railway, the occupation he held, when he enlisted for WW1 in September 1914. However, he was declared unfit for service owing to defective teeth, flat feet and hammerhead toes!

Charles Skyrmes (1854-1951) was a third cousin of Evan Skyrmes. He was born on the Corston estate at Hundleton, a few miles south west of Pembroke. He started work as a gardener in Monkton, but by 1899 had moved to the Pontypridd district of Glamorganshire here he married a Jane Evans. The 1901 census records him as a platelayer based at Hirwain, another station on the Taff Valley. By then he spelt his name Skyrme. The record of his admission in 1907 to The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants lists him as a ballast guard. The Society's records show that he received the princely sum of £30 on his retirement on 17th May 1939 (aged 65) and his widow Jane received £5 shortly after his death.

David John Skyrme (1865-1936) was the son of cabinet maker James Skyrme and Martha Richards, and a third cousin of both Evan and Charles above. He was brought up in Pembroke Dock and originally started work as an apprentice in his father's trade. But in October 1881, age 15, he became a railway

lad clerk at New Milford (one of the termini of the Great Western in Pembrokeshire) at a salary of £20 per annum. By 1884 his salary had doubled to £40. By 1891 he was based in Corwen in North Wales (then in Merionethshire) as a railway goods clerk where in 1892 he married Bradford girl Sarah George. From 1896 to 1901 the family lived at Market Drayton in Shropshire. In February 1901 David was appointed stationmaster at Albrighton, a station on the GWR line from Paddington to Birkenhead via Birmingham Snow Hill. In July 1908 he was appointed stationmaster at Bala, 12 miles SW from his former base at Corwen on the Corwen-Barmouth line.

In 1910 the family moved to Chester. The *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard* of 15th April 1910 reports his move as follows:

"Promotion - Mr D. J. Skyrme, who has now been for some years stationmaster at Bala, has been promoted to be a relieving stationmaster at Chester and will henceforth take up his residence at Chester. During his stay at Bala he has made numerous friends who will regret his departure."

At the time of the 1911 census his wife and 7 children are living in Chester, but he is recorded as being a boarder with a railway porter at Dolgelley (also on the Corwen-Barmouth line). The final entry of his GWR record (around 1915) shows him back at Chester as a relief clerk, with a salary of £180pa.

William James Skyrme (1892-1922). William was the eldest son of David, and the only one of his four sons to enter railway service. He was a railway clerk at Chester in 1911, but died at the young age of 29.

Ernest Scourfield Skyrme (1871-1943) entered service with GWR at Highbridge on the Bristol to Taunton line in May 1887 at annual salary of £25. This increased to £35 in July 1888 and £45 in July 1889. He moved to Tiverton junction in Feb 1890 and his salary increased to £55 in July 1891. He moved to Tiverton in Oct 1892. During the 1890s he joined the Royal Marines, when he dropped his surname and adapted his middle name to become Erneset Schofield. This is reputed to be because his mother and siblings, all teachers, disapproved of his choice of career!

Ship's Crews

If a person said they worked for Great Western you would assume that they worked on the railways. But this was not necessarily true in the late 19th century. After all, earlier in the century it was Brunel's vision to connect London to New York via railway to Bristol. This gave rise to the Great Western Steamship Company and its first ship *SS Great Western*. As noted earlier the railway company extended its routes into Wales and to the port at Neyland for connection to Waterford in Ireland, then operated by the shipping company Ford and Jackson. It was the Great Western Railway (Steam Vessels) Act of 1871 that allowed GWR to operate its own ships on this route, which it did from 1872.

The first ship to be build specifically for GWR was *SS Pembroke* built by Laird's of Birkenhead. It started as a paddle steamer in 1880. After an accident in 1895 it was converted to a twin screw ship that started operating in 1896.

It was at March 1895 that GWR records show Peter Skyrme (1872-1954) of Pembroke Dock as a second engineer and a crew member of *SS Pembroke*. His wage was £2 5s a week. Peter was not a Manorbier Skyrme but from the Skyrmes of Llangwm. He lived only a few streets away from another GWR ship employee, who was in fact from the Manorbier cluster.



This was James Skyrme (1876-1945) the great grandson of farmer James Skyrme (1780-1834) of

Manorbier (see page 5). He was a ships fitter.⁹ GWR Records show that in 1907 he enlisted on a GWR Ship probably the *SS St David*, one of three ships that operated on the Fishguard - Rosslare route that had started in 1906). His record shows that although he is rated as very good, that he deserted Fishguard 22 Feb 1908! By then he had four children. Perhaps he missed them or simply fell out with his superiors. The 1911 census shows him at home in 66 Meyrick Street and now listed as an engine fitter.

What About Planes?

Regrettably the Great Western Company did not get airborne. However, several Skyrmes who served in the Royal Air Force and also the Air Corps of the US Army (the predecessor of the US Air Force). There will be more about them in a future edition, either in this chapter or Chapter 9 on military service.

⁹ Similar in nature to that of a shipwright, a ship's fitter worked in iron. There are various reports of demarcation disputes between these two allied trades.

8 EMIGRATION TO USA

This chapter will appear in a future edition. It will trace the migration of Skyrmes into Pennsylvania and onwards.

9 WWI & MILITARY SERVICE

This chapter will appear in a future edition.

With such a widespread conflict, the Great War of 1914-18 inevitably meant that many Skyrmes of fighting age were called up, both in England and the United States. This chapter will give profiles of those Skyrmes where there is more than the basic information. Those to feature will include:

- Agnes Lizzie Skyrme (b. 1886) who joined the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps.
- John Thomas Skyrme (1884-1937) who was one of the last survivors taken off the shipwrecked hospital ship *HMHS Rohilla*. The tragedy of the *Rohilla* was one of the defining moments of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and resulted in changes in sea regulations and methods of rescuing.

10 OCCUPATIONS & TRADES

This chapter will appear in a future edition.

Already we have looked at farming, mining, and transport. This chapter will cover other occupations. It will also include an occupational analysis of changes over time.

11 DISPERSION

This chapter will appear in a future edition.

Today, the descendants of John Skyrme and Elizabeth Maurice will be found in various places in England, the USA and elsewhere. This chapter will contain an analysis of the dispersion from the original locations of Ludchurch, Manorbier and Penally over each decade.

12 NOTABLE CHARACTERS

This chapter will appear in a future edition.

Every family has its notable characters. Some are renowned for their good works, others not so good. While this branch of the Skyrmes do not have characters as illustrious as those of the Herefordshire Skyrmes¹⁰, there is at least one worthy of mention including:

- Tony Hilton Royle Skyrme (1922-1987) – an eminent nuclear physicist whose work led to a theoretical model that includes the Skymion.

¹⁰ Such as dashing Josephine O'Dare (aka Trixie Skyrme), or Sir Thomas Skyrme – see *The Skyrmes of Herefordshire*.

13 MISCELLANY

This chapter will appear in a future edition.

This is a catch-all chapter that will include interesting snippets that do not logically fit elsewhere. It will, for example, include an analysis of boys and girls names over time. If relevant, it will include examples of where the name Skyrme has been carried on as a middle name or the first part of a double barreled name, such as Skyrme-Jones, Skyrme-Mason.

14 NEXT STEPS

As stated in the Preface this One Name Study is an ongoing process, and this publication is just a start on the story of the Manorbier and Penally Skyrmes. Future editions will fill in the gaps, and with your inputs, will correct errors and add additional information.

Some of the ongoing tasks are:

1. Continuing constructing family trees from the raw data. At the time of writing, I am working on the 30 or so families of the 6th generation (with John and Elizabeth as the first).
2. Making connections, where possible, between the clusters of Skyrmes in different locations, e.g. can we connect the Skyrmes of Manorbier and Penally with those of Manorbier. Ian Skym, my predecessor of this One Name Study has some interesting ideas.
3. Filling in more contextual detail from less accessible sources, such as wills, leases, trade directories and newspaper reports. There are several hundred in my "to process" files.
4. Updating the various analyses, such as migration patterns and occupation analysis, but adding more such as life span analysis.
5. Providing more localised distribution maps, such as that shown in Chapter 1.

There is no set timetable for when the next update to this edition will be published, but with my new incremental approach, hopefully it will be by the end of 2017.

As usual, I welcome feedback, corrections and additional material.